



My Puppy's New Tricks

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Eternally Speaking Now

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I've got to tell you all about my puppy.

Before I get into that story though, I must begin with a trivia question:
How many thoughts go through the human mind every day?

Stop.
Think.

What thought went through your brain one second ago?
How about right now?
How many total thoughts like that do you have daily?

Answer: Recent research reveals that we have
over 60,000 thoughts a day.

60,000. That's a ton of words and concepts swirling around in our heads, with most passing through unnoticed. Just because many are overlooked, though, doesn't make them irrelevant. On the contrary, they play a huge part in forming our worldview and determining our responses to life's situations.

While I do not ascribe to psychiatry or Freudian philosophy, I do value a variety of Sigmund Freud's observations about the human mind, especially when they echo what the Lord has already spoken. The following quote is not only fitting but also true:

According to Freud, thoughts and emotions outside of our awareness continue to exert an influence on our behaviors, even though we are unaware (unconscious) of these underlying influences. The unconscious mind can include repressed feelings, hidden memories, habits, thoughts, desires, and reactions.

In the same way that deep thoughts affect and shape our behavior, external stimuli impact and persuade our inner inklings as well.

The saying "Garbage in, garbage out" is 100% true.
In the same way that we are what we eat, we become what we think.

This has been indisputably proven by countless studies on how humans react to hearing, seeing, and consequently assimilating repeated messages. For centuries, politicians, businesses, grass roots organizations, world leaders, and advertisers have capitalized on this reality. And it is in full swing today.

Scripture confirms this as well.
The fact that our thoughts determine our actions
is scattered throughout the pages of the Bible.
Consider these verses.

As we **think** in our hearts, *so are we.* (Proverbs 23:7)
Yes, Jehovah God spoke this long before Buddha did.

We **reap what we sow.**
If we sow to the flesh, we *reap corruption*;
if we sow to the Spirit, we *reap everlasting life.* (Galatians 6)

Desire leads to enticement which leads to sin which ends in death.
(James 1:14-15)

Unbelievers walk in the futility of their **mind**, in **ignorance**,
with blindness of heart, which, without repentance,
leads to living in lewdness and greed. (Ephesians 4:17-19)

"But you have not so **learned** Christ,
if indeed you have **heard** Him and have been **taught** by Him,
as the truth is in Jesus:
...be **renewed** in the spirit of your **mind**..."
(Ephesians 4:20-21, 23)

To seal the deal on these truths, examine Philippians 4:8-9.

"Finally, brethren, whatever things are true,
whatever things are noble, whatever things are just,
whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely,
whatever things are of good report,
if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—
meditate on these things.

The things which you **learned** and **received** and **heard** and **saw** in me,
*these **do**, and the God of peace will be with you.*"

We **think**, we **learn**, we **receive**, we **hear**, we **see**.

Then we **do**.

If the things we ponder are of the Lord
(true, noble, just, pure, lovely, of good report, virtuous, praiseworthy),
then the "God of peace will be with" us.

Simple, right?

Hmmm. Not necessarily.

I'm about to complicate things, but I promise it will only be temporary.

Did you know that we are called to take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ? Yes, *every one* of those 60,000+ thoughts. *Every day*. Why? What does it matter? 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 explains.

"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh.
For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal but mighty in God
for pulling down **strongholds**, casting down **arguments** and
every **high thing** that exalts itself against the **knowledge** of God,
bringing **every thought** into captivity to the obedience of Christ."

Our thoughts are like strongholds. Fortresses.

They come as an argument or 'high thing'
that attempts to exalt itself against the knowledge of God.

We are in a war, and it is not carnal.

It is spiritual, and our well-being (and ultimately our eternal existence)
is determined by how we process our thoughts.

We.

Must.

Bring.

Every.

Thought.

Into captivity.

To the obedience of Christ.

How on earth are we supposed to take captive every one of those 60,000+ thoughts?

As one who has resolved to do this for a couple decades now, I can answer with assurance, *"One thought at a time."* I can also add with encouragement, *"The more we make it a habit, the better we get at it."*

So, what does all this have to do with my puppy dog?

Everything.

Here goes.

Are you ready?

Let me tell you about my little doggie.

My brain is my puppy dog.

No, really. I mean it.

Consider the various correlations between a person's precious canine and his or her own priceless cranium:

Both a dog and a human brain
exhibit a variety of emotions, including empathy and comfort.
Both experience fear and react strongly to startling stimuli.

Both perk up with warning signs and
will do what is needed to protect and defend their owner.

Both develop similar long-term responses to
either being loved or being mistreated.

Both come running when it's time to eat.

Both need to be fed, and both need to take naps.

Like a pet dog, your brain could be considered as man's best friend.

And...both can be trained.

Here is how I train my pup:

Stop.

Think.

Sit.

Stay.

Good dog.

Stop: Throughout the day, make a conscious effort to stop and think about what you were pondering at that moment. I've been taught to think of it like pressing pause on the remote control of your brain.

Think: Rewind the video a few seconds. From where did that thought come? Was there a trigger? Was an emotion connected to it?

Sit: Confidently command that thought to sit under the blood of Jesus, in the light of His Word. Is that notion noble, true, just, pure, and praiseworthy? Does it line up with the truth as revealed in Scripture? If so, keep it. On the other hand, if that contemplation is a stronghold, if it argues against the knowledge of God, as if to exalt itself above Him, then cast it down. Refuse it. Immediately. Say out loud according to James 4:7, "I submit to God, I resist that thought from the devil, and it has to flee from me now, in Jesus' name!"

Stay: Replace the lie or unholy thought with a Scripture. This is easy; please don't complicate it. Do a quick internet search and find a verse that negates that faulty reasoning. (For a selection of printable Scriptures already organized by topic, [visit this link here](#).) Determine by an act of your will to **trust in the Lord** and **"stay"** your mind on Him by renewing your mind with truth. He will change your thoughts as you are faithful to train your brain.

Good dog: Be nice to yourself and speak kindly to your brain. Taking every thought captive can be hard work, and when you've done it, you've done well! Give the Lord glory: as you **trust in Him** and do this, **He promises to keep you in perfect peace.**

"You (the Lord) will keep him in perfect peace,
whose **mind is stayed on You**,
because he **trusts in You.**" *Isaiah 26:3*

CHALLENGE

How is *your* puppy?

If you were to tell me all about your brain, how would you describe it?

I wonder if your doggie is like mine.

It's got a few old tricks that need to be replaced with some new ones.

The greatest challenge we face as we
teach our old hound new tricks is...
the squirrels.

You know how a dog will be doing fine by your side and then suddenly get distracted by a squirrel? Within seconds, your loyal pet loses his scruples, forgets everything else, and fixates on that distracting rodent.

Similarly, we'll be doing fine with the Lord, our thoughts aligned with the light of His truth, when suddenly, "*Squirrel!*" Our head whips around, our ears and eyes are diverted, and our minds begin to spin out of control and into the enemy's grip. We freeze, mentally distracted by an idea that yanks us away from that **peaceful place** of **Sit and Stay**.

Those sly, scheming squirrels can appear in many forms, including:

- Thoughts that lead us to question God's love and goodness toward us
- Confusion that leaves us unable to discern His direction
- Overwhelming imaginations that erroneously fill in blanks and unknowns
- Fearful assumptions about the future

What's worse, those voracious vermin present themselves as powerfully convincing, even huggable. Don't be persuaded by their deception! Every untruth is a lie, and lies are from our enemy the devil, whose very name is 'a murderer from the beginning, and the father of lies.' (*John 8:44*)

So, if your puppy is your brain, and the squirrels are the thoughts in your brain that draw you away from **staying** your mind on the truth, then what are *your* specific squirrels? Lust? Anger? Unforgiveness? Jealousy? Discontentment?

Name those sneaky squirrels. Expose them. Call them out and chastise them!

You can catch those naughty squirrels and teach them a lesson.

Cast them down before they get the best of your pooch.

Then rest in the perfect peace of the Lord as you put your trust in Him.

**"Trust in the Lord forever,
for in Yah, the Lord, is everlasting strength." *Isaiah 26:4***

Train your brain to **sit** and **stay** in the truth,
and prove to the world (and yourself) that,
whether yours is an old lethargic dog or a young playful pup,
you really can teach it new tricks.

Stop. Think. Sit. Stay. Good Dog.

"And do not be conformed to this world,
but be **transformed by the renewing of your mind**,
that you may **prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of**
God." *Romans 12:1-2*

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